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NO: 1854, January 3, 5 p.m.

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Control: 1001

Rec'd: January 3, 1962

3:39 pm

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ACTION DEPARTMENT 1854; INFORMATION LONDON 335, PARIS 311, BONN 288, BERLIN 212.

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Although in our discussion Berlin problem yesterday Gromyko mentioned in passing removal of deadline I was struck by fact that he showed no disposition to be in any hurry or interest in how long present phase might continue. Also notable he did not use abusive language re West Germans.

It is clear he will maintain position he cannot discuss details of access until he has fairly clear idea of what access is to. Question arises as to what I should say about our thinking on status of West Berlin. For example if I am to reveal non-negotiable points in Section 2, Annex 3 of Working Group Report, particularly point D concerning West Berlin relationship to DRG, I am afraid discussions would be over. Maintenance of present situation would be more advantageous to Soviets than what we propose. As a minimum I believe Soviets will insist upon our willingness to discuss a new status for West Berlin but might accept arrangement whereby they would be free to state occupation status ended by their separate treaty, while we would maintain that our occupation rights continued to exist. In any event believe they will insist that it be made clear West Berlin is not part of West Germany. Believe we have strong argument for reserving occupation rights in order to ensure that no future West Berlin regime engage in provocative actions.

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-2- 1854, January 3, 5 p.m. From Moscow

Gromyko based objection to all-Berlin solution on grounds different social system. In order keep ball in play on this issue would it be possible for us to suggest willingness consider establishment "Confederation of West and East Berlin" with each side maintaining its own security, economic and currency arrangements, etc., but with some overall body to handle certain common problems such as transportation, sewage disposal, etc. with possibility a few of its functions could be expanded by mutual agreement. Arrangement would provide for freedom of movement within Greater Berlin and presumably wall would have to be built around rather than across Berlin. In view Soviet endorsement Ulbricht's Confederation proposal for Germany might be awkward for them to object and could be useful device for them to have excuse for removing wall. This would also cover their demand for change in status Berlin and they would share occupation rights by occupation their sector, in any case I need something positive to say about our thinking on status West Berlin at next session and would appreciate as precise guidance as Department can give.

THOMPSON

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